

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION**

MID-PACIFIC REGION

**SOUTH-CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AREA OFFICE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA**

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**TULARE IRRIGATION DISTRICT IN-BASIN EXCHANGE WITH CONSOLIDATED
PEOPLES DITCH COMPANY AND FARMERS DITCH COMPANY
CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT, CA**

FONSI-07-27

Recommended by:

Laura Myers
Natural Resource Specialist
South Central California Area Office

Date: _____

Concurred by:

Valerie Curley
Acting Resource Management Division Chief
South Central California Area Office

Date: _____

Approved by:

Will Shipp
Deputy Area Manager
South Central California Area Office

Date: _____

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In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the approval of the exchange project is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact is supported by Reclamation's Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) Number EA-07-27, *Tulare Irrigation District In-Basin Exchange with Consolidated Peoples Ditch Company and Farmers Ditch Company, Central Valley Project, CA* and is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) proposes to approve a long-term exchange of up to 40,000 AF/y of TID Central Valley Project (CVP) water for an equal amount of non-CVP Kaweah River water from CPDC and/or FDC.

The proposed exchange is for the purpose of irrigation deliveries and conjunctive use operations, and improved water management within the Kaweah Basin which may include:

- Optimization of power production at the hydropower plant at Terminus Dam;
- Reduction of conveyance losses within the Kaweah River system;
- Improved flexibility in utilization of Kaweah River entitlement and available storage; and
- Improved flexibility in utilization of Friant Class 1 and Class 2 supplies, when available.

TID seeks to deliver all of its accrued Kaweah River entitlement during its summer irrigation because Lake Kaweah has minimal conservation storage space in the months of November through March.

Reclamation's purpose is to facilitate the efficient delivery and allocation of water for environmental and economic benefits as authorized by the Central Valley Project Improvement Act.

A long-term exchange of up to 40,000 AF/y of TID CVP water for an equal amount of non-CVP Kaweah River water from CPDC and/or FDC is necessary to maximize water management opportunities and flexibility.

FINDINGS

Water Resources

The proposed action will not affect contractor operations and will not change the existing diversion points or operations for other contractors. The exchange will be a bucket-for-bucket exchange and will not increase or decrease CVP allocations. It will not interfere with TID deliveries.

Land Use

The proposed action will not result in any land use changes. The exchange will not result in development of homes or municipal or industrial uses. The proposed action is for exchange of up to

40,000 AF/year (AF/y) TID CVP water in return for equal amount of non-CVP Kaweah River water from CPDC and/or FDC. The exchange water will be conveyed in existing facilities and does not require any land disturbances. The exchange water will be delivered to established agricultural lands.

Biological Resources

There will be no impacts associated with approval of the exchange of up to 40,000 AF/y of water, as the water supplies will not change, the water deliveries will not result in more water or less water being delivered to any given area, and there will be no new facilities constructed to deliver the water. Land use changes will not occur as a result of this action, as there is no change in the amount of water that will be available to support any such land use alterations. For the same reasons, there will be no effect to species or critical habitats listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Cultural Resources

Exchange water will be conveyed in existing facilities to established agricultural lands that have already been tilled and disturbed. No excavation or construction will be required. Water exchanges through existing facilities that will not change land use constitute a no potential to affect.

Indian Trust Assets

There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the water involved with this action, nor is there such a property interest in the lands designated to receive the water proposed in this action. The nearest Indian Trust Asset (ITA) to this action is located approximately 4 miles west and it is the Santa Rosa Rancheria. This action will have no adverse effect on Indian trust assets.

Socioeconomic Resources

The proposed action is the exchange of water and will not result in increases or decreases to irrigated lands or jobs. Seasonal labor requirements will not change, and agriculture dependent businesses will not be affected. No adverse effects on public health and safety will occur. The proposed action will not result in changes to population, land use trends, water allocations, or other factors related to population growth and urbanization within the County of Tulare. Providing this affordable water will continue to maintain existing agricultural lands and could delay the conversion of agricultural lands to homes.

Environmental Justice

Neither TID, CPDC nor FDC will be changing historic land and water management practices. The proposed action and alternative are variations on the timing, place, conjunctive use of surface and groundwater, and local energy costs of delivery of water practiced by water districts and landowners. The proposed action will not affect minority populations.

Cumulative Impacts

Exchanges are a common practice throughout the CVP project area and provide the flexibility for improved water management decisions for farmers. Exchanges are temporary actions and do not result in any long-term increase or decreases of surface water in any specific region because an equal amount of water is returned. There are no cumulative effects to water resources. There will be no land management changes for land uses. The proposed action will not result in major cumulative impacts to biological resources. The proposed action and exchange will not impact any cultural resources as the exchanges will be through existing facilities that will not change land use.

The Proposed Action will have no cumulative effects on ITAs. The proposed action will not cause harm to minority or disadvantaged populations.

Approval will not have highly controversial or uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown risks. Impacts associated with the proposed action are minor, short-term, localized and temporary in nature; therefore, there are no significant cumulative impacts associated with this project.